

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

# INFORMATION REPORT

**CONFIDENTIAL**

COUNTRY Poland

DATE DISTR. 26 Jan. 1950

**SUBJECT** Observations on the Appointment  
of Rokossovsky as Commander-in-  
Chief of the Polish Army

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1. In forcing the Polish Government to appoint a Russian marshal as Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Armed Forces and Minister of National Defense, the Politburo has taken a step of quite unusual temerity. One of the Kremlin's guiding principles in governing its satellites has been to maintain the appearance of home rule. No Russian marshal or high official has heretofore been shifted from a high administrative or military post in the Soviet Union to one in a satellite country. Though ROKOSSOVSKY is of Polish descent, he is thoroughly Russianized, and is considered no more of a Pole than TUKHACHEVSKI, DZERZHINSKI OR VYSHINSKI.
2. Under ordinary circumstances, military reasons would not have brought about an appointment which will recall Czarist governor generals who ruled with a mailed fist. Poland was ruled by obedient servants of the Cominform like President BIERUT, so that any measures conflicting with the policy of the Kremlin could be, and were, suppressed immediately. The Polish Army was under especially strict control, with Russian officers in all key positions. The Polish Air Force, the wartime Soviet 6th Air Army, was commanded by Soviet Colonel General POLYNIN until 1947, and is now under General ROMAYKO, a former Soviet air division commander. Poland is surrounded by Russian troops. Any insubordination would have been suicidal, and would have been crushed by ROKOSSOVSKY's headquarters (Liegnitz in Silesia).
3. The Politburo must also be fully aware that it has dealt a hard blow to Polish national pride, an outstanding Polish characteristic. A measure which might be tolerated in Czechoslovakia or Rumania will be intolerable to Poland. Furthermore salt is rubbed into the Polish wounds by the

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fact that it is ROKOSSOVSKY who will be their boss. He is identified with the betrayal of the WARSAW insurrection, since he commanded the Soviet 2nd Belorussian Front which halted at PRAGA, just across the Vistula River from WARSAW, until the Polish insurgents surrendered to the Germans. The books of the Polish General ANDERS and former Premier MIKOLAJCZYK seethe with hate and rage at their betrayal by the Soviet Army.

4. It may be concluded that reasons of paramount importance must have impelled the Soviet Government to an action which can have very serious consequences.

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5. The appointment of ROKOSSOVSKY is a preventive measure against further spread of National Communism ("Titoism") in Poland. Weight is added to this conclusion by the recent appointment of Marshal ROKOSSOVSKY as full member of the Polish Politburo. MOSCOW was determined to avoid a repetition of the BELGRADE debacle. Next to the Yugoslavs, the Poles are the proudest and most nationalist minded of the satellites of MOSCOW. Nationalist tendencies in Poland had previously to be suppressed several times: Vice Premier GOMULKA and his followers had to be removed, and three under-secretaries of state were forced to resign a few weeks ago. Even Marshal ZYMIELSKI, ROKOSSOVSKY's predecessor, seems to have been recalcitrant. According to a REUTERS telegram he opposed a proposal of the Russian High Command to train Polish troops for service with the Greek guerillas. It is almost certain, therefore, that the Soviet Government wanted to avoid any risk of another satellite mutiny and did so by appointing a Russian general to command the Polish Army.
6. Strategic considerations helped to bring about this appointment. The Politburo may have considered it necessary to have direct and complete command of the Polish army. The indirect command through Soviet officers in advisory positions, under Polish generals who possibly were not wholly reliable, may have been thought insufficient. This does not necessarily imply any intention to start a war in the near future. The general attitude of MOSCOW regarding war does not seem to have changed, and no offensive by the Red Army is likely during the next two years.
7. Another consideration may have been that after evacuation of Germany by the Soviet Occupation Forces, Poland will become the cornerstone of the satellite system in Eastern Europe. In the event of evacuation of Germany, the Soviet Union would also withdraw her troops from Poland, since there would be no communications to Germany to protect. It is of the greatest importance, therefore, that the Polish Army remain an absolutely reliable weapon in the hands of the "remlin, since this army would have to put pressure on Eastern Germany in the event of any anti-MOSCOW developments. Should Poland succeed in following TITO's example and free herself from MOSCOW's domination, the immediate result would be the loss, not only of Eastern Germany, but of Czechoslovakia and probably Hungary. ROKOSSOVSKY's appointment is meant to insure MOSCOW's rule over this part of Europe.

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8. Important political reasons may also have entered into the Politburo's decision. The German territories east of the Oder-Neisse line now incorporated into Poland will certainly play an important role in the shaping of policy toward the Eastern German State. For the time being, the Soviet Government does not seem inclined to continue the policy of concessions with which the formation of its newest satellite was inaugurated. PIECK had to announce that no peace treaty would be concluded. General CHUIKOV heads the Russian Control Commission, the ruthless PUSHKIN has been appointed ambassador, and the conciliatory SEMYONOV has vanished into the background. This attitude may be just as quickly reversed when it seems appropriate for the Politburo to dangle the hope of the return of the eastern territories before the eyes of Eastern and Western Germany. In such a situation MOSCOW must have a government in WARSAW which obeys its orders, which cannot be expected of any Pole, even though Communist and MOSCOW-trained. Obedience can only be forced upon BIERUT and his colleagues by a Russian proconsul.

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9. Important conclusions can be drawn regarding the situation created by the appointment of ROKOSSOVSKY. It is certain that losing the last of their self-government will exasperate the Poles and cause hatred for their foreign oppressors. The underground movement will certainly receive new impetus. The Pole, a natural conspirator, will be willing to take still greater risks to injure his oppressor and to organize for fighting at the opportune time.

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